

THE COURIER

Quarterly Publication of the Bethel Historical Society's Regional History Center
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O'Neil Watson Robinson First Owner of the Robinson House

As certain as can be currently determined, the building acquired by the Society in 1998 was built about 1821 by O'Neil Watson Robinson, who was born in Chatham, NH, 21 September 1797, the son of Increase and Mary Cox Robinson. According to a document quoted in Lapham's *History of Bethel*, Robinson's name was listed on a petition from Bethel to the Massachusetts Governor for permission to form a regiment and to elect officers dated 29 December 1815. In his genealogical section, Dr. Lapham notes that he was here prior



O'Neil W. Robinson (1797-1867)

to Maine statehood or just afterward. Since the house was apparently constructed ca. 1821, the earlier date may be more likely as he may have met his future wife, Betsey Hilton Straw, while she was visiting her sisters, Agnes Straw Mason and Abigail Straw Hastings, who lived next door on Broad Street in a southerly direction from the Robinson House. Robinson established a general store next to his residence and also became a licensed retailer of spiritous liquors after he

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WESTERN MAINE SAINTS The York and Carter Families Conversion to Mormonism and Western Migration

by Carole York

"I first embraced Mormonism in 1834 in the town of Newry, Oxford County, State of Maine. The first elders I ever heard preach were John F. Boynton and Daniel Bean. They came to my father's house, and my mother lay very sick. The doctors had given her up. The elders told her they were preaching a new doctrine and they told her that she could be healed if she could have faith, that they would lay hands upon her. They did lay hands upon her and said, 'In the name of the Lord Jesus be thou made whole.' And she was made whole and arose and called for her clothes and said I must go to the water. She walked one half mile and was baptized in the river called the Bear River and confirmed. And there was a large branch raised up in that place."

John Carter did not join the Church. When his wife was healed, he said, "that sure beats doctor bills," but he never joined the Church.

The above account of the conversion of Hannah Knight Libby Carter to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, also known as the Mormon Church, was written by her daughter, Eliza Ann Carter Snow. This essay will describe the conversion experiences and western journey of the closely related York and Carter families and their efforts to help settle Salt Lake and other Mormon towns in Utah and the southwest. The David and Patty Bartlett Sessions family and Mary Ann Frost Stearns Pratt and her family have been featured in previous issues of *The Courier*. By looking closely at the conversion and western migration of the Latter-day Saints from Bethel and Newry, the history of the early church is enhanced and enlarged. Moreover, this analysis contributes to the history of backcountry Maine during the years following the Revolutionary War.

This was a period of religious unrest and revivalism—the Second Great Awakening that had started in New England during the 1790s. Between 1825 and 1832, evangelist Charles Finney aroused great excitement as he preached across what has been called the "Burned Over District" of New York State, so named because it was a flashpoint of religious fervor. By the 1830s the Second Great Awakening had begun to wane.

The York, Carter, Frost and Sessions families illustrate the dedication and devotion that inspired Mormons to persevere in the face of opposition, harassment, and even violence. Mob attacks against the Mormons occurred in Ohio, Missouri and Illinois, and Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were murdered in Carthage, Illinois, in 1844. Like thousands of other Saints, these early members of the church endured the

Continued on page 5

PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR 2008

- February 16–34th Annual Heritage Day
March–April–Course: “Topics in New England History”
May 8–Lecture: “Benedict Arnold’s March Through Maine to Quebec” by Thomas Desjardin, Ph.D., Historic Site Specialist, Bureau of Parks and Lands
May 24–Annual Faye Taylor Memorial Art Show
May 24–Annual St. Never’s Day Sale
June 12–Lecture: “The Enigma of James G. Blaine” by Neil Rolde, Biographer, Maine Author and Publisher
July 1–Exhibit Opening: Mason House Exhibit Hall, “The Grange in Maine”
July 4–Fourth of July Community Picnic featuring concert by the Portland Brass Quintet
July 26–Ripley Brass Band Festival
August 8–Hall Memorial Lecture, “Marsden Hartley: New England History and 1930s Regionalism” by Donna Cassidy, Ph.D., American and New England Studies Program, University of Southern Maine
August 8–10–Sudbury Canada Days–Annual Summer Heritage Festival
September 11–43rd Annual Meeting, Potluck Supper, Lecture: “Historic Maine Presidential and Senatorial Election Campaigns as Recalled by the Political Memorabilia of the Time” by Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Director, Maine Historic Preservation Commission and State Historian
October 9–Lecture: “Marketing Apples in Maine” by Ben B. Conant, Curator, Paris Cape Historical Society
October/November–Fall Course–TBA
November 13–Lecture: “Androscoggin River Water Quality: Past, Present, and Future” by Barry Mower, Maine Department of Environmental Protection
December 4–Annual “Christmas with the Masons”
December 31–11th Annual New Year’s Bethel Celebration

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY’S COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE

The Bethel Historical Society is committed to building on its reputation as a premier regional history center that will continue to enrich the educational and cultural life of its community for generations to come. Members and friends have generously contributed to the operations of the Society and to the acquisition of the Robinson House. In order to ensure the long-term maintenance and further development of the Center’s facilities, programs, and collections, the Society is seeking new forms of support. You, readers of *The Courier*, are asked to consider making a charitable gift to the Society through a bequest in your will, the establishment of a trust, or a number of other financial arrangements and options that are available. These charitable gifts can be structured to support the Society’s mission while at the same time assuring the security of your family. For more information, please contact the Society by calling (207) 824-2908 or (800) 824-2910 or by writing to P.O. Box 12, Bethel, ME 04217-0012 or by emailing: info@bethelhistorical.org

President’s Column

As we close on 2007 and look toward 2008, it is important to focus on at least four recent items of interest at this time.

From my perspective, New Year’s Bethel X continue to be one of the highlights of the program year. Although attendance was down from previous years, the enthusiasm of those who turned out was a most appropriate way to welcome 2008. One couple came from Tennessee just to attend our event.

In a previous column, I note that the Planning Study undertaken by the Board of Trustees in the first half of 2007 had been completed and that the Board was considering the conclusions of the study and formulating plans to determine how to proceed with accomplishing the Society’s vision for the future.

The Planning Study provided recommendations to be taken before launching a successful campaign. One of these steps was the formation of a Readiness Task Force, which has been formed and has met several times during the past few months. This committee will be using the Planning Study as a departure point in determining what specific steps are necessary to put the Society in a solid readiness posture for a future campaign. In my next column, I expect to discuss what steps will be suggested by the Task Force.

The self-assessment phase of the Governance Assessment sponsored by the American Association of Museums was completed in December. The next phase calls for a surveyor to visit the Society in the spring to provide a peer review of the Society’s governance practices. This visit will mark the culmination of an eighteen month effort designed to assist the Board of Trustees, the governing authority of the Society, to improve its governance practices.

The new standing committee of the Society, Mineralogy and Mining, will meet for the first time in January. The membership of this committee includes Frank Perham, Hugh Chapman, Woodrow Thompson, Norman Davis, Mary McFadden, Larry Stifler, and Addison Saunders, all of whom represent a knowledgeable and highly respected group of individuals who possess an active interest in minerals and mining in Western Maine. This committee will play a key role in guiding the future of the planned mineralogy and mining museum within the Society’s proposed addition to the Regional History Center.

Allen Cressy

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Help keep the Society strong by making a gift to its Annual Fund Campaign. Tax deductible contributions help support its exhibits, special events, publications, and other programming. Gifts in any amount may be made throughout the year to the Society at P.O. Box 12, Bethel, ME 04217-0012.

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 THANK YOU!

(Western Maine Saints, continued from page 1)

long, treacherous journey to Salt Lake City, where they transformed a harsh desert environment into fertile farmland and created a major American city.

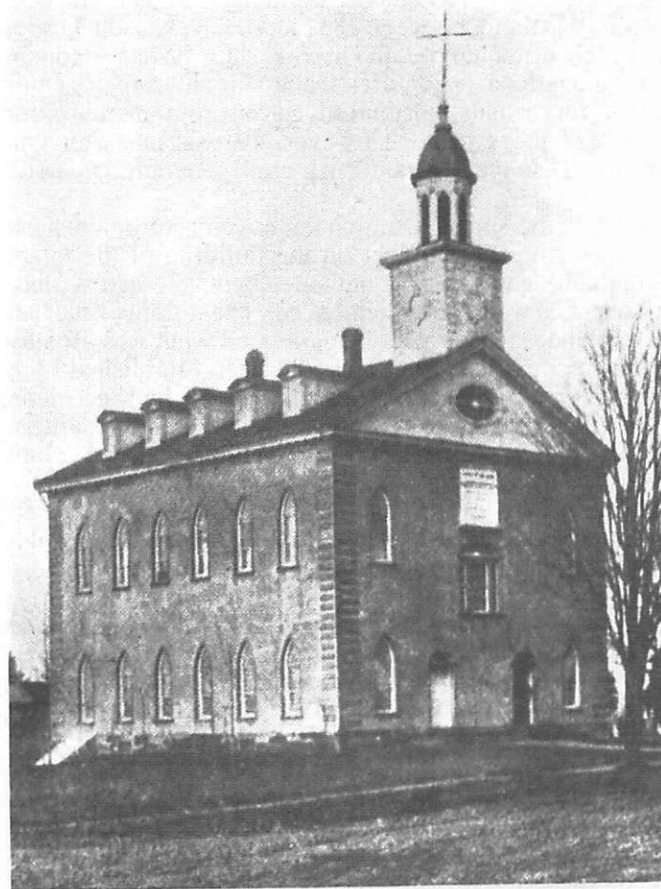
Joseph Smith, Jr., was born in Vermont in 1805, and his hard working but poor family moved often during his childhood. While living in Palmyra, New York, young Joseph was intensely influenced by this religious conflagration and confused by the sectarian controversies that surrounded him. He stated that he asked God for wisdom and that his prayer was answered in a series of revelations. The first one occurred when he was about fifteen years old, and he reported this to his family. In 1823, by Smith's account, he received a revelation from an angel, Moroni, who told Smith where to find a set of golden plates. From these plates, engraved in ancient hieroglyphics and compiled by Moroni's father, Mormon, Smith translated *The Book of Mormon*. Published in 1830, this scripture told of an ancient history of the Hebrews who had settled in North America and an account of Jesus bringing the Christian message to the new world. Soon after, missionaries spread out across what are now the eastern and Mid-Atlantic States.

Missionaries first arrived in Maine in 1832, and in that year they baptized Timothy Smith in Saco, after which a branch of the church was formed. Missionaries Wilford Woodruff and Jonathan Hale converted approximately one-hundred persons from the Fox Islands—now Vinalhaven and North Haven—in 1837-1838. Forty-six converted in Bethel/Newry, Maine, between 1833 and 1870 (mostly during the 1830s), among them Aaron and Hannah Carter York and William Furlsbury and Sarah York Carter.

Joseph Smith, in *The History of the Church of Latter-day Saints, Period I*, wrote that on 21 August 1838, "Seven of the twelve [LDS apostles] met in conference at Saco, Maine. The church in that place numbered fifty-seven; the Dover branch in New Hampshire, eight." On 28 August 1838, Smith continued, "This day I preached on the duty of wives. The traveling High Council assembled in conference at Farmington, Maine, and resolved—that this be called 'The Maine Conference.' The Church at Farmington numbered thirty-two; in Sitter B., [Letter B] twnty-two[sic]; in Akwry [although this town cannot be located on current maps, "Newry" may have been intended], twenty-five; in Errol, New Hampshire, twenty; all in good standing." It is not possible to give the exact number of converts, because members to a new faith come and go. The best estimate is from the *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History* that states approximately five-hundred saints left for Utah from Maine between 1832 and 1847. In 1850, Brigham Young ordered the Saints still remaining in Maine to migrate to the west.

Six of the nine children of Hannah Knight Libby and John Carter converted: Dominicus, the oldest; Hannah, who married Aaron Marean (often spelled Mereon) York; William Furlsbury, who married Sarah (Sally) York; John; Richard, and Eliza Ann Carter Snow. John Carter and three children Almira, Philip Libby and Mary Jane, traveled as far as Nauvoo, Illinois, but did not convert. Dr. William B. Lapham, in the genealogical section of his *History of Bethel, Maine*, merely states that Aaron and his sister, Sarah, "went to Utah," and another sister, Martha Eames York, who married Philip Libby Carter, "went to Tioga, Illinois."

During its early years, the LDS Church was a lightening rod for controversy because of its heretical beliefs about the Bible and Christianity, communal economy, monolithic politics and, until 1890, the practice of polygamy or plural marriage. A chapter in the town history of Saco, "The Mormon Invasion," describes the reaction to the missionaries



Mormon Temple at Kirtland, Ohio

by many townspeople:

"The Mormon elders were unwearied in their efforts to enlarge the circle of their influence and to drum up recruits for their semi-religious community. Like flaming heralds, they traveled from town to town, and their evident sincerity and unbounded enthusiasm drew thousands to them. But there was determined opposition. The ministers of the gospel stood outside and openly warned their people to keep clear of these missionaries of a strange faith. The culminating effect proved that the spirit of the Mormons was identical to Cochranism [one of the new sects that grew out of the Second Great Awakening]. Both systems produced the same ruinous upheaval in the domestic circle, and the wreckage of blasted homes was scattered all along the coast where the devastating storm held sway." The writer notes that, at this time, polygamy had not been mentioned and that some of the converts moved west, including James Townsend who built the first hotel in Utah. Others became preachers, traveling in North America and internationally to gain more converts to their faith.

On 15 August 1835, Brigham Young came to the Sessions home and encouraged those who had been baptized the previous summer by Daniel Bean and John F. Boynton to move west. In the summer of 1836, the Yorks and Carters, along with others from Bethel and Newry, traveled to Kirtland, Ohio, then the church headquarters. In August, David Sessions drove Mary Ann Frost Stearns and her daughter, Mary Ann, to Portland. Here the mother and her three year old met other converts with whom they traveled to Kirtland. It took the Sessions family until June, 1837, to settle their affairs, at which time they left for Kirtland. Here the Bethel/Newry converts attended the newly built temple,

participated in church meetings and joyfully sang the songs of Zion. Kirtland, between 1831 and 1837, was the home of the church's first temple, and here is where it first established its organizational structure, leadership hierarchy, church doctrines and rituals, spiritual education programs, and strong missionary movement. However, all was not well when Aaron and Hannah Carter York and their families arrived there.

In 1837, the Kirtland church underwent a turbulent period after incurring a large debt on the building of the temple, buying land, and assisting new members who had settled in Missouri and were in financial need. The failure of the bank, the Kirtland Safety Society, aggravated what was already a desperate situation. The bank had been established by the church after its application for a bank charter had been denied twice, in 1836 and 1837, by the Ohio legislature. Internal opposition arose against Joseph Smith and other church leaders, and many Saints apostatized and left the church. Opposition also arose from the non-Mormon or Gentile community, threatened by the church's financial and banking practices, land speculation, and communitarian economic practices. Persecution had begun in Ohio at least as early as 1832, where on March 25th; Joseph Smith had been beaten, tarred and feathered. The Mormon emigration began in January, 1838, and by July most of the Saints had left Kirtland for Far West, Missouri.

Eliza Ann Carter Snow wrote about the family's experience after arriving in Kirtland: "The next year [1837] an apostate movement arose, and John F. Boynton, the missionary who had brought them the gospel in Maine and had since become one of the first quorum of apostles, became one of the bitterest and most violent leaders against the prophet. So intense was the persecution, that those who remained staunch and faithful were forced to leave for Far West, Missouri." In February, 1838, William F. Carter and Eliza Ann, who had recently married James C. Snow, began their journey, driving a team of oxen. It was bitter cold, and in Terre Haute, Indiana, one of the oxen died. They had no money and no home, so they took shelter in a horse stable during the worst winter storms. Eventually Hyrum Smith's company came along, and Eliza and James traveled with them to Jacksonville, Illinois where her brother, William, and the one ox, left behind, caught up with them. "He had made a harness and tackled him up and the one ox carried his wife and three children to Missouri, and when I saw him, I rejoiced to see him have so much faith, but the Gentiles made all manner of fun of him. They said, 'there goes a d--- Mormon with one ox,' but he got out of there just the same; and Father Joseph Smith said it would be in the annals of history.

"After that the Kirtland Camp [comprised of impoverished saints who could not afford, without church support, to go to Far West] came along and we went to Missouri with them. We went into an old log house that we could poke a cat out between the logs and there my first child [Sarah Jane] was born; it was the 30th day of October in the year 1838. ...It was cold and snowed every day and the mob came into Far West the very day of her birth, and we were much excited. I could not keep the midwife long enough to dress my child. ...The mob was blowing horns and firing guns all night long. We were without bread or anything to make bread of, but by the help of the Lord we were preserved by the brethren giving up arms and promising to leave Far West." Mormons first arrived in Missouri in 1831, settling in Independence, Jackson County; by 1833 opposition against these pioneers drove them across the Missouri River into Clay and Ray Counties. There, in 1836, facing ongoing enmity and in an

attempt to avoid their hostile Gentile neighbors, the Saints agreed to move to Far West, an isolated undesirable area that no one else wanted. The carefully designed city plan was the same model used in developing other cities of Zion, including Salt Lake City. By the fall of 1838, Far West had grown into a thriving community of 5,000 citizens. However, in the same year, the Saints were hounded from Missouri after Governor Lilburn W. Boggs, on 27 October 1838, ordered them out of the state.

In addition to its contentious financial and religious practices, political opposition arose against the church. Missouri had been established as a slave state by the Missouri Compromise of 1820, and many Saints had come from the anti-slavery northeast. Whether they were truly opposed to slavery is not entirely clear. Joseph Smith was strongly opposed to slavery, but most Mormons refused to take an anti-slavery stance, believing it to be established legal precedent in Missouri. However, the perception that the Mormons were against slavery persisted, which added to the opposition against them. Moreover, the efforts of the Saints to convert the Indians aroused alarm among the non-Mormon residents. Forced to abandon their homes and property, the Mormons moved to Commerce, Illinois, which they renamed Nauvoo. This city became the new church headquarters.

In February, 1839, Eliza, her husband James, infant daughter, and two other families were on the move again. They shared one wagon, drawn by several old horses, and took turns walking, this time to Illinois. They had no tent, and slept near their campfire. In this group were Domenico Carter, and Aaron and Hannah Carter York with their families, and John and Hannah Knight Libby Carter. On 11 August 1839, Sarah Emily, a daughter of Domenico, age two years and three months, died. In October, the group finally arrived at a location near Lima, Illinois, twenty-five miles south of Nauvoo. It was named Morley's Settlement for Mormon leader Isaac Morley, also known as Yelrome (Morley spelled backward). In 1842, John and Hannah Knight Libby Carter purchased land there.

Nauvoo prospered initially and was allowed liberal powers of autonomous self-government by a charter from the Illinois legislature. Here, between 1839 and 1844, the church built its second temple and established a militia. Members contributed their efforts toward establishing a hotel, flour mill, foundry, chinaware and tool making factories. Converts from England, who began arriving in 1840 contributed to its growth, and by 1844, the population of Nauvoo was 10,000, the second largest city after Chicago. However, the Saints had settled in swamp land. Mosquitoes caused malaria and unsanitary conditions and tainted water caused many to become ill with typhoid fever. Poverty plagued the community, because the Saints had been forced to leave their previous settlements, including Kirtland and Far West, in haste and many English converts arrived without financial resources.

In June, 1844, Joseph and his brother, Hyrum, were murdered while imprisoned in the Carthage, Illinois jail on flimsy charges of treason. The accusations against them grew out of charges and counter charges that followed the cessation and destruction of the *Expositor*, shut down by the City Council because of its inflammatory anti-Mormon articles. The fact that, early in 1844, Joseph Smith had declared himself a candidate for President of the United States no doubt contributed to what was a volatile atmosphere. Elder Perrigrine Sessions, with his unique syntax and spelling, wrote the following about this event: "...Brother Joseph and Hyrum was taken and when in prison under the pretention of Goviner [Governor Thomas Ford] and

the plited faith of the State they were Murdered in cold blood in Prison by a gang of black harted reches on the 27 of June 1844..."

In September, 1845, a mob burned one-hundred-twenty-five buildings in Morley's settlement and Lima. The residents fled to Nauvoo, and when they returned to harvest their crops, vigilantes who were never put on trial, killed Edmund Durfee. In February, 1846, the Yorks and Carters, along with many faithful compatriots, began to evacuate Nauvoo. They crossed the Mississippi River into Iowa, first by boat and, after the river froze, on foot. By summer only about six-hundred Mormons remained, mainly those too sick or too poor to move on. From the tenth to the twelfth of September, 1846, skirmishes occurred between the Saints and an Illinois renegade militia. On the thirteenth, the Battle of Nauvoo ensued, lasting only one and three-quarter hours. Surrendering to their far stronger adversaries, the remnant Saints agreed to leave the city, and the Illinois troops agreed to protect the helpless residents who were unable to travel, some of whom were non-Mormon newcomers to the settlement. Hubert H Bancroft wrote in the *History of Utah, 1540-1886*, that the militia disregarded the treaty. "The mob entered the temple, ordered an inquisition, and regardless of Mormons or new citizens went from house to house, plundering cow-yards, pig-pens hen roosts and bee-stands indiscriminately; thus turning some of their best friends into enemies, bursting open trunks and chests, searching for arms, keys, etc. ...In the temple ringing bells, shouting, and hallooing; they took several to the river and baptized them, swearing, throwing them backward, then on to their faces, saying: 'The commandments must be fulfilled and God damn you.'" By the end of September, all the Saints had departed, leaving behind their property and any hope of peaceful accommodation with the Gentiles.

In 1847, led by Joseph Smith's successor, Brigham Young, companies of wagons began the 2,000 mile trek to the western territories, at that time still a part of Mexico. As the day of departure from Nauvoo drew near, John Carter adamantly refused to join the church. He died in 1852 in Illinois. Domenicus, a skilled blacksmith, stayed in Kanesville, now Council Bluffs, Iowa, to help prepare the emigrant trains for the grueling trip ahead. He and his mother crossed the plains in 1851 and arrived at Salt Lake City on the twentieth of June. In 1852, he was elected counselor to George A. Smith, who had married another Bethel/Newry native, Lucy Meserve Smith [no relation] on 24 November 1844 in Nauvoo. George Smith presided over the settlement, and James C. Snow became the first president of the Utah Stake.

The Saints had chosen, as their new home, the remote Great Basin in order to geographically separate themselves from hostile Gentiles. However, the church recognized that it depended on the United States to provide protection, investment capital and consumer goods. In 1849, the church instituted a formal governmental structure with a constitution and elected officers. Brigham Young was elected governor of the proposed state of Deseret, a word from the *Book of Mormon* that means honey bee. Deseret, as first envisioned by the church, covered approximately 490,000 square miles extending from the Sierra Nevada range on the west to the Rocky Mountains on the east and encompassed an area that included present day Utah, Nevada, parts of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho, Wyoming and Colorado. The State of Deseret ended in 1851, when the United States Congress passed the Compromise of 1850, which made California a state and created the territories of Utah and Nevada.

Conflict continued, however, between the LDS Church

and the United States Government, because the Saints continued to practice and strongly defend their unconventional religious and collective business practices that did not include non-Mormons. The church's involvement in politics and their practice of plural marriage aggravated the situation. War broke out in 1857, when President James Buchanan sent in an army to "reestablish law and order" and replace Brigham Young with Alfred Cumming, from Georgia, as territorial governor. The Utah War, later considered a gross overreaction by President Buchanan to political pressure and unreliable information, was brought to an end by a truce brokered by Thomas L. Kane. Kane was a Pennsylvania judge, a prominent Democrat and reformer. An advocate of abolition, education for women and prison reform, he became a strong friend and supporter of the Saints. A close bond between Kane and the Mormons developed after he became ill at Winter Quarters, Nebraska, across the Mississippi River from Council Bluffs, Iowa. Here he was nursed back to health by the Saints, and he never forgot their kind treatment. The Saints, in gratitude to him for his efforts on their behalf, named their settlement at present day Council Bluffs, Iowa, Kanesville.

After renouncing polygamy in 1890, Utah entered the Union in 1896. Clashes between the Saints and the United States ended, and greater cooperation between the Mormons and non-Mormons developed. Here in a barren dessert, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints finally found a place where its members could practice their faith in peace. From one of the most persecuted creeds at the beginning of the twentieth century, today the Mormon Church has become the most successful of the nineteenth century utopian groups. In 2006, its membership was 5,599,177 in the United States and in Canada, and almost 13 million worldwide; in 2006, it grew by 1.74%, the second fastest growing denomination among the twenty-five largest churches in the United States.

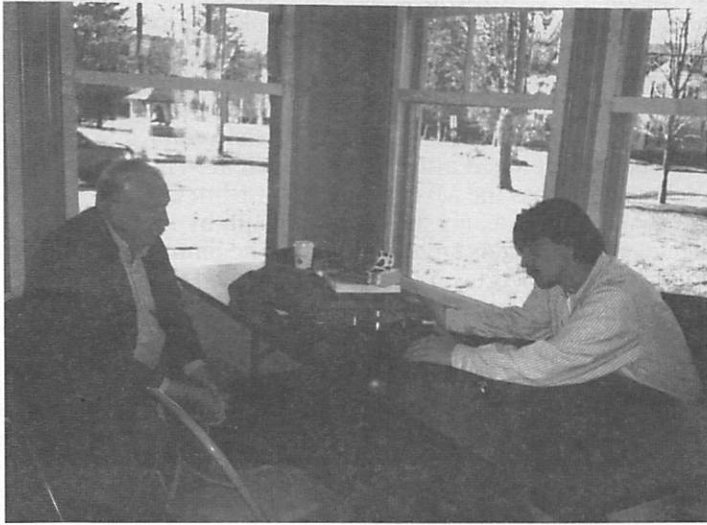
Hannah Knight Libby Carter died shortly before or on 2 November 1867, age eighty-one, having lived with her son, Domenicus, who had helped settle Provo. "Those who remember her describe her as short in stature, with a round face, impressive blue eyes and refined and dignified bearing. She frequently wore a lace cap and was very prim and neat. She was well educated and industrious, keeping her knitting close by and working even in her advanced years." Her funeral was at the Provo Cemetery, and the day, according to Eliza was very cold. On Memorial Day, 1941, a bronze plaque, with the motif of a covered wagon, was placed at her grave. It read, "HANNAH KNIGHT LIBBY CARTER, Oct. 9, 1786 - Nov. 1867, 'faithful in the day of trial.'"

(to be continued)



Hannah Knight Libby Carter bronze gravemarker
Courtesy of Gary and Marcia Braithwaite

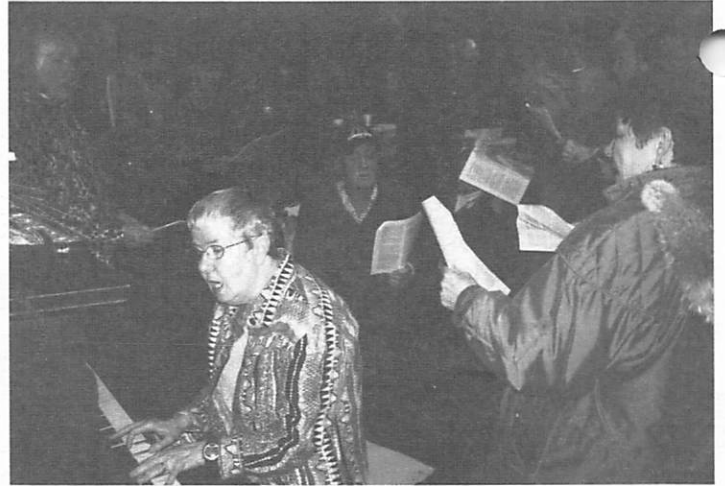
Photo Gallery



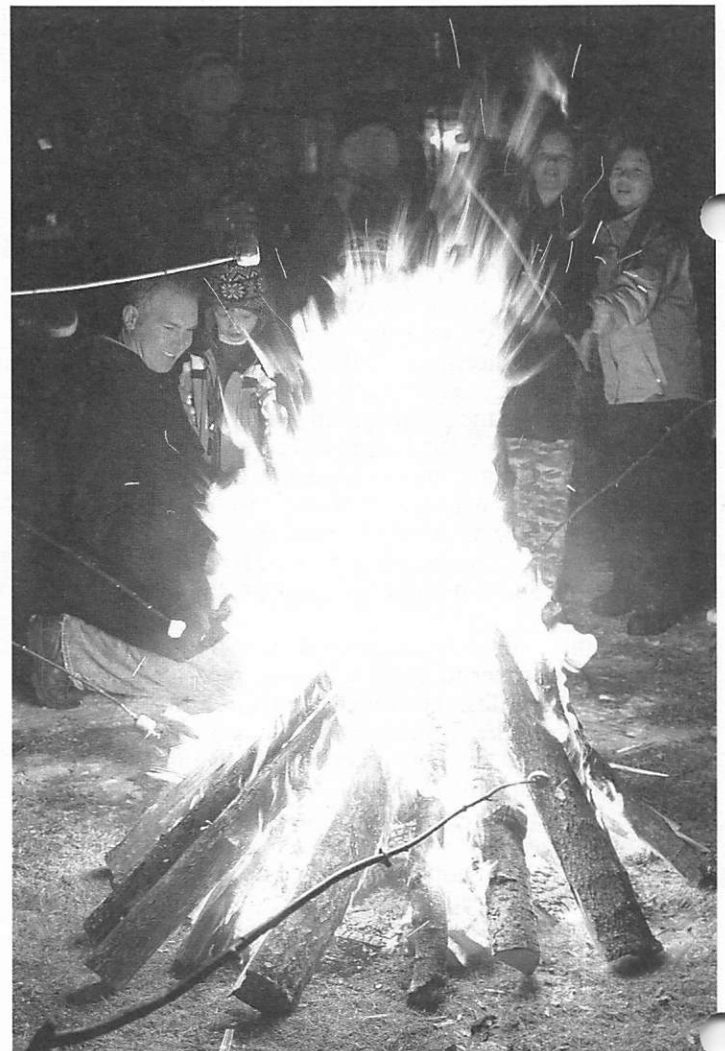
Errol Briggs of Barre, VT and Harrison, ME (left) with a compass he brought for "Valuation Day" on November 10 for Jay Boschetti of Steam Mill Antiques, Bethel, to comment upon and provide some idea of its value.



Entertainer Judy Lee (with friends) presented a fast-paced, interactive and fun-filled Broadway-style cabaret show at the 2007 New Year's Bethel celebration. Photo by Alison Aloisio, courtesy of the Bethel Citizen.



Sing-a-long event at 2007-08 New Year's Bethel, led by Lynn Arizzi at the piano.



New Year's Bethel 2007 revelers enjoyed the ever-popular marshmallow roast on the Bethel Hill common. Photo by Alison Aloisio, courtesy of the Bethel Citizen.

Diary of Edgar Harvey Powers

(continued from the last issue)



February 14—Got started to go down to James [sic] to see how they was [sic] getting along, but met Milton and he told me I could do no good if I went in there, so I did not go down. He said Estella was worse and could not live. I am very sorry; wish she could get well. Charles and Sarabette have been down here today. Charles went down to James [sic]. He said Estella was dying. If it must be so, she will be saved a life of trouble. I do not think it proper to have an exhibition next Tuesday and have taken measures to stop it. I feel it is my duty to stop it, and shall do so if it is in my power. Estella died this afternoon at twenty five minutes past two. James sent up for Loch and I to go down and sit up with the corpse. We went down, but John Saunders said he and wife Angie Rowe Saunders was [sic] going to sit up, so we come [sic] home. February 15—Went down to see if I could help James [sic] folks any. I went up and got Abner [Powers] to be one of the bearers. Chopped wood awhile and Mrs. Roberts wanted me to go after Edwin and Theresa. Met them coming down at the upper schoolhouse. Just got back & James wanted me to go up and get Josh [Howard] and Preston [Howard] to go down and sing. Went up round by Howards [sic] & Saunders. Walcott addressed the mourners and made a prayer. It was the most solemn occasion I ever witnessed, and the handsomest corpse I ever saw. Mr. Bessey and Mr. Stearnes [sic] stay here to night with one yoke of oxen and sixty one sheep. February 16—Mr. Bessey paid me two dollars for his keeping last night. Milton and I got up two loads of wood for James this forenoon. Has been snowy this afternoon. Carried some balm gilead buds up to Mrs. [William O.] Straw. Went down to the village with Loch. Carried a saw down to Holts [sic] to get fixed that Edwin left here. James [sic] folks are getting along pretty well, I guess. Emma is quite sick though. February 17—The coldest day we've had this winter. Have not been down to Mr. Roberts to day. Saw Mr. Howard, and he said they had help enough, so I thought it was so cold, I would not go down. Called up to see Cod. Ann Black is there. I guess they will not have many to the circle to night. It was to be at Unckle [sic] Orsons [sic] to night. February 18—A very cold night, last night. We broke out the roads today. Joshua R. Howard called here this morning. He said he set [sic] up with James [sic] folks last night and the night before last. I called down to see them this afternoon. They all appear to be doing well except Emma. She is a sick child. She will not take anything if she can help it. February 19—Called down to James G. Roberts this morning. Emma appears to be a little better. Hope she will get better in a few days. Carried Julia Stearns [daughter of B. Franklin and Julia] over to Rumford Corner. The thermometer stood at 28 [degrees] below zero this morning. Got the house insured in the Monmouth Company. Mr. [Peter Y.] Beans [sic] other girl [Sarah L.] died this morning with Diptheria [sic]. His boy is sick with it again. Loch ran away last night, but Cod over took him at Lockes Mills and brought him back. February 20—Have been chopping drift wood to day. Called down to James G. R. [Roberts] this forenoon. They are getting along nicely. Emma is decidedly better. Went up to Newry. Called on Charles but staid [sic] at Edwins [sic] all night. Charles swaped [swapped] my watch with Ira M. Russell, and got six dollars in money, and some change. Had a very good time at Ned's. Sarabette let

me take two of her papers to read Mrs. Ryerson is quite frightened about Diptheria [sic]. Aunt Sally [Sarah Stearns] and Orville have been at Unckle [sic] Orsons [sic] visiting today. Liz and Philantha [Howard, daughter of Joseph] went up to spend the evenng, and staid [sic] till twelve. February 21—Come [sic] down from Newry this morning. It is quite good sleighing. Called at Abner Browns [sic] to look at them [sic] chaise that Charles traded for. They are very good chaise. Loch told me to day, that if Corydon had not got to Lockes Mills just as he did, in fifteen minutes he should have been on his way to Boston. He has told before, he thought likely he should run away sometime but I did not think he would. He and the girls are going to school on Bethel Hill this spring. If I could let this farm or get a good, steady hand to come here and see to things till the middle of May, I should go to school this spring. Got started to go over to Elias Bartletts [sic], to put some letters in the office, but stopped to James, and before I started his wife came in there, so I gave it to her. Emma is recovering quite fast. I promised Corydon I would stay with him to night and so its half past seven. I must go. February 22—I staid [sic] with Corydon last night. We went to sleep about twelve. He told me all about Loch running away. He stole twenty dollars of Corydons [sic] money, or rather he took it. Cod told me some thing about himself I little thought of. Loch come [sic] along and wanted me to go down with him. I put a bushel of corn in his sleigh and went down with him. After I got back I put up some oats and corn, and went to the mill. Could not get it ground to day, and had to leave it. Corydon started for Washington this morning. He gave Loch the twenty dollars he took when he ran away, and a fur collar. Loch has been down here this evening. I have not felt very well today. I don't know but I have a little cold. Hope I shall not be blunderhead enough to write one thing over twice. February 23—Went up to Abner Browns [sic] [resided where Stanley Brown lives today] and got them [sic] chaise I bought. Loch, Elvi, and Delphina (?) went up on Bethel Hill to school today. They board themselves. I have been chopping wood to day. Mother has been down to Cyrus Bartletts [sic] this evening. I went down and got the grist. Stopped for the mail. Got letter from Mary E. Lampher. Come [sic] up and stopped to Cyrus, awhile. I heard to night that Milton Roberts wife [L. Josephine Jewett] had got the Diptheria. They are all doing well, down to the village, and up around the Pond [Howard Pond].

(to be continued in the next issue)



Gravestones of Edgar H. and Jennie D. (Stearns) Powers in the Hanover, Maine, cemetery.



Member Profile Ken and Gwyneth Bohr

Kenneth Bohr was born in 1919 in Boston, MA, the son of Harry and Miriam Bohr. He attended schools in upper New York State, Ohio, Massachusetts and Canada before graduating from high school in Portsmouth, Ohio. He enrolled at MIT in 1937, graduating in 1941. Having joined ROTC at MIT, he was called to active duty in the summer of 1941 and served as an ordnance officer for four years, two in the States and two overseas in England, France and (after the surrender) in Germany. Following his service in World War II, he returned to the U.S. and married Gwyneth Griffin, whom he had met during his MIT days. He and Gwyneth, who served as a lieutenant in the WAVES during World War II, attended graduate school with the financial assistance of the G.I. Bill. After several years teaching, Ken and his family left Cambridge, MA for Washington, DC, when he was hired by the World Bank. He remained with that institution for thirty-two years, during which, among other postings, he was assigned work in India for four and one half years and was allowed to bring his family with him. Ken and Gwyneth retired to Bethel in 1986, but had purchased their residence here in 1982. Ken had become familiar with some parts of Maine from his camping and canoeing experiences going back to 1930. Since retirement, he has been especially active in the Mahoosuc Land Trust, Project Opportunity and in developing the Town of Bethel's Comprehensive Plan.

Gwyneth Bohr was born in Evanston, IL in 1920, the daughter of Bryant and Maurine Griffin. She was educated in West Orange (NJ) schools, and graduated from Radcliffe College in 1941. She married Ken Bohr in 1946, following service in the WAVES, where she was a Personnel Officer and Assistant Security Officer in a factory in Cincinnati, OH. Gwyneth also graduated from Simmons School of Social Work in 1948 and from Virginia Theological Seminary in 1979. She was ordained an Episcopal priest, serving as interim rector in churches in cities and small towns in the Washington Diocese, southern Virginia, and later in Maine. She has conducted a monthly Episcopal House Church in Bethel since 1991. Very active in Androscoggin Home Health hospice visiting and training as well as NTL, she is presently on the Finance Committee of Bethel's Lewin Center.

Both Ken and Gwyneth have been enthusiastic and generous supporters of the Society for many years. Ken also served as Secretary and Clerk of the Trustees of the Society from 1988-1991.

Ken's hobbies include canoeing, camping and gardening. He is currently also writing his life story. Gwyneth enjoys reading mystery novels, knitting, and outdoor activities such as gardening.

They are the parents of three daughters and have four grandchildren.

Query: Author Ann Chandonnet of North Carolina is annotating letters by Andrew Jackson Bean (1828-1919) of West Bethel to his sister Eliza Howard Bean Foster (1835-1867) of Lowell, Massachusetts. She is interested in knowing more about other members of the infantry company Andrew enlisted in, Company I, 5th Maine Volunteers. If you have materials related to the Fifth Maine or to the Ebenezer Bean family, please contact her at chandonnetvale@bellsouth.net or 6415 Tarheel Drive, Vale, NC 28168.

In Memoriam

Died, 9 November 2007, Barbara H. Brown, Bethel, Life Member

Died, 18 December 2007, Ronald E. Snyder, West Bethel, Senior Member

(O'Neil Watson Robinson continued from page 1)
won approval at the 1821 town meeting. On 27 December 1833, Robinson became Bethel's second postmaster following the resignation of Dr. Moses Mason, who was leaving for Washington to assume his duties as United States Congressman from Maine. Robinson's "liberal" temperament politically was also in evidence in matters of faith since he is listed as a founder of the Universalist Society. In 1835, he sold his house and store to Robert Chapman, resigned as Postmaster and moved to Portland for a time and then Waterford. He served as a Justice of the Peace during his Bethel days and represented the town in the Maine House of Representatives in 1832. Becoming Sheriff of Oxford County in 1843 while living in Waterford, he continued in that post until 1850. He owned large tracts of land along the Androscoggin in the towns of Gorham, Berlin, Milan and Dummer, New Hampshire. He and his wife had six children and are buried with four of them in the front row of Bethel's Woodland Cemetery. ■

Editor's Corner

Once again we are featuring another owner of our O'Neil Robinson House as we complete (at least for this series) our researches into the history of the building we acquired nearly ten years ago. It possesses a rich legacy and that touches on the lives of several of the leading figures in the town's past. Having an office in this remarkable structure since 1999 has been a deeply rewarding experience. Previously, I was confined to a four foot square space in the Dr. Mason House barn with only a small window under the eaves. The Executive Director's third floor Robinson House office is full of the morning light, has lots of closet space, a separate computer desk, comfortable chairs for small meetings and enough wall space to display some of the important holdings in the Society along with items from my personal collection. It is a great place to carry on the work of the Society, including producing issues of *The Courier*.

SRH

Book Note

Sermons in Stone: The Stone Walls of New England and New York. By Susan Allport. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990. Pp. 205. Paper. \$14.95).

Susan Allport has presented numerous insights into one of New England's most treasured icons, the stone wall, perhaps made most famous by Robert Frost's often cited poem, "Mending Wall." Here we find out about the people (children, slaves, farmers and indentured servants among others) who built them, how they were assembled, and the wide variety of stones and designs used in their construction. Profusely illustrated by David Howell, this book is a very readable treatment of the subject. Divided into four sections with twelve chapters, the book also includes a useful bibliography and index.

SRH

For ordering information, please see page 12

New Life Members

Mitchell F. Barker, Albuquerque, NM
John and Roberta Chandler, Lovell
Daryl Collard, Victoria, BC
Victor L. Coolidge, Bethel
Mary Jane Cusack, Nahant, MA
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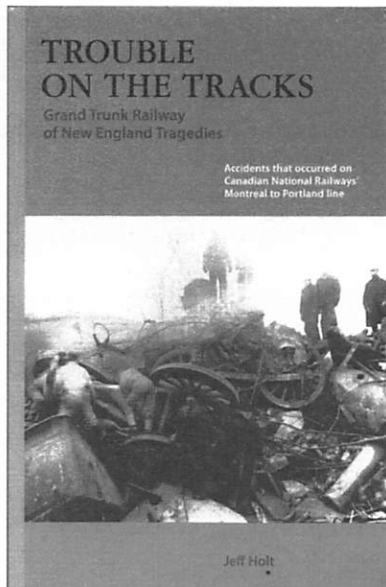
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